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STATE FOR WHA/PDA CHAD WEST AND WHA/CAR JACKIE ROSHOLT

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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATION OF RABINDRE PARMESSAR IN FY
2008 MULTI-REGIONAL PROGRAM: "U.S. FOREIGN POLICY"

¶1. (U) SUMMARY. Mr. Rabindre Parmessar, opposition Member of Parliament from Suriname, participated as an international visitor in the FY 2008 Multi-Regional program "U.S Foreign Policy" from February 28 to March 20, 2008. Parmessar was overwhelmingly positive upon his return, and said visiting the United States of America changed in many ways how he perceives the country, including his perception of diversity within the United States. Parmessar said the discussions and speakers were on a very high level: "the people we met were very, very highly qualified." END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Rabindre Parmessar, a member of Parliament and a former (and likely future) Presidential candidate, was effusive in his praise of the FY2008 Multi-regional program "U.S. Foreign Policy" (February 28 - March 20, 2008), emphatic in his thanks "for the opportunity," and enthusiastic in the detail in which he presented his experiences at a lunch hosted by the Ambassador on April 17. Parmessar told us his IV experience changed the way he perceives the United States and gave him a better understanding of U.S. diversity.

Parmessar said he was impressed by the number of different institutions that provide input into the foreign policy-making process, and that he noticed that individual states have a lot of room to maneuver. Parmessar talked most warmly about Kansas; he said it is one of the best places in the world when it comes to animal health, and he asked himself why Suriname does not send students there. He said he noticed that the state is very active on environmental issues.

¶3. (U) The program delivered immediate results, as Parmessar said he now sees lots of business opportunities for Suriname in the U.S. In fact he acted on one within a week of the program's completion organizing a business deal through acquaintances in Florida. Parmessar also said he noticed that quality clothes are cheaper in the U.S. than in Suriname, and came up with the idea of sending a business delegation to the U.S.

¶4. (U) When asked if there were any things that could have been better, Parmessar emphasized again that the program had been excellent. He was pleased with the high quality of the discussions and speakers, saying "the people we met were very, very highly qualified." He also said he had already had a chance to share any suggestions for improvement before leaving the States, and that he mentioned the following at that time: at a certain point in the program the participants were split up into several groups traveling to different cities. He suggested that in the future participants be given the opportunity to indicate their preferences on these splits, so they can be optimally matched.

¶5. (SBU) Post was extremely pleased with the selection and participation of Parmessar, and with the extremely positive impression he says it had on him. His political party, the National Democratic Party, is frequently critical of the United States in the press, and its Chairman has a poster of Hugo Chavez on his office wall. Parmessar is a likely contender for President in 2010, and his party is Suriname's largest.

SCHREIBER HUGHES